

MDT/MSU Design Unit

Program Overview

The MDT/MSU Design Unit is a long-standing cooperative partnership between the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Montana State University (MSU), established in 1992 to strengthen the state's transportation engineering capacity through on-campus, real-world design experience. A team of MDT engineers oversees student employees from an on-campus office.

Engineering Workforce Pipeline

- Develops a reliable in-state workforce pipeline for MDT and its consultants, aligned with Montana's transportation needs.
- Builds a talented pool of candidates by providing students with hands-on training using MDT standards and design tools.
- Supports long-term staffing stability, with 75% of participants remaining in Montana's transportation industry after graduation.
- Strengthens recruitment by placing MDT engineers in the classroom and maintaining an on-campus presence.

University-Agency Collaboration

- Establishes an integrated model where MDT engineers contribute to university education as instructors and mentors.
- Enhances engineering instruction through exposure to current transportation design practices and software tools.
- Allows students to earn academic credit while gaining hands-on experience contributing to MDT projects.

Program Impact and Success

- 65 program participants have joined MDT after graduation, reflecting a 35% retention rate.
- Graduates are well prepared for state leadership roles, with alumni advancing to positions such as Project Manager, Section Supervisor, Bureau Chief, District Administrator, and Chief Engineer.
- The program is prominently featured in MSU's recruitment materials for prospective civil engineering students.

Contact

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